

Gun Control Rebellion?

An analysis of trends in handgun manufacturing for domestic sales since implementation of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act

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Introduction

November 1998 was arguably the high water mark for federal gun control in the US. It was then the FBI implemented the National Instant Criminal Background Check System [NICS], a key provision of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993. [Brady Bill]. The NICS is designed to prevent certain prospective purchasers with criminal backgrounds from obtaining firearms.

The Brady Bill may have prevented some handgun violence because of the NICS checks but it did not achieve an implied purpose of reducing handgun purchases. Handgun sales data indicates that it may have unintentionally fed an on going rebellion against gun control by the American people.

Between 1998 and 2010 handgun sales, as indirectly tracked by handgun manufacturing for domestic sales, increased substantially. Sales of small framed concealable pistols, presumably to customers without criminal backgrounds, showed the largest increase in annual sales. The sales accelerated after the 2008 election.

It is not the intention of this report to present arguments for or against gun control legislation. The purpose is to suggest an objective methodology for measuring trends in gun sales and firearm possession for policy makers, using publicly available data and observing impacts of potentially causal events.

Methodology

The analytical technique for this study uses data published annually by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives [ATF]. The Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports compile information submitted to ATF by firearm manufacturers through annual reports required under the provisions 18 U.S.C. Chapter 44, Firearms. The reports for 1998-2010 are shown in Attachment #3. The report for 2004 is excluded from this analysis due to insufficient data resulting from a 74% reporting rate.

The reports list firearms manufactured in the US by type and, for pistols and revolvers, by caliber. The reports also reveal the number of exported firearms by type.

The basic assumption for this study is that firearm manufacturing is market driven and manufactures produce guns annually to replace sold inventory and to meet expected demand for their products.

Therefore the trajectory of firearm sales should parallel closely the quantities of guns manufactured over a period of years.

Firearms produced for domestic sales are calculated by subtracting exports from manufacturing totals.

The trend analysis for small frame concealable handgun sales is calculated by examining production of .380 caliber pistols. This weapon is not suitable for target shooting or hunting. It is not issued to US police or military. It is produce almost exclusively in the US in small frame cancelable models for personnel defense.

Changes in manufacturing of .380 caliber pistols should therefore be a reliable barometer of trends in small frame cancelable handgun sales.

Annual production of .380 caliber pistols along with annual manufacturing of handguns for domestic sale is shown in Attachment #1. For comparison purposes annual quantities for domestic rifle sale production are listed in Attachment #2.

Findings

The following trends are concluded from an analysis of the ATF reports:

1. Annual manufacturing of handguns for domestic sale increased by 219% between 1998 and 2010 since implementation of the NICS requirement of the Brady Bill. This is greater than the 137% annual increase in rifle sales for the same period. [A 171% increase in 2009 figures].
2. Annual manufacturing of small concealable handguns for sale rose by 667% between 1998 and 2010.
3. Caliber .380 pistols represented 6.6% of total handgun sales in 1999 and increased to 24.2% by 2010.
4. Annual firearm production and sales decreased during the 2001 economic recession but did not slow down during the deeper and longer 2008-2009 global economic recession. This maybe the result of the effect of the election of 2008 and a perceived threat to gun ownership the election represented.
5. Annual gun production and sales increased at greater rates following the 2008 election.

Handgun, and particularly small concealable handgun production and sales saw dramatic increases in the years following implementation of the Brady Bill and were accelerated after the 2008 election. The clear lesson for policy makers is that Americans can rebel against gun control measures or perceived threats to firearm ownership, and that attempts to legislate or regulate firearms without wide support from gun owners are likely to be counter productive.

The methodology used in this study, although not an exact count of actual gun purchases, can be utilized as an objective and transparent technique for future studies of trends in annual US firearm sales.

Attachment #1

Handgun Manufacturing for Domestic Sales 1998-2010

Year	.380 Caliber	Total Handguns	Causal Event
1998	98,266	1,239,430	Brady Bill NICS
1999	81,981	1,247,951	
2000	108,881	1,205,095	
2001	41,634	882,166	Economic recession
2002	59,476	1,031,542	
2003	79,788	1,078,160	
2005	107,386	1,029,163	
2006	126,939	1,230,430	
2007	138,484	1,531,283	Election
2008	278,945	1,736,789	
2009	390,897	2,326,674	
2010	655,512	2,716,050	

Source: Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Attachment #2

Rifle Manufacturing for Domestic Sales 1998-2010

Year	Total Rifles	Causal Event
1998	1,280,092	
1999	1,534,016	
2000	1,533,400	
2001	1,233,869	Economic recession
2002	1,454,642	
2003	1,367,802	
2004	Omitted	
2005	1,338,674	
2006	1,393,676	
2007	1,530,329	
2008	1,641,595	Election
2009	2,187,779	
2010	1,754,038	

Source: Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Exporting Reports, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Attachment #3

Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports

1998-2010

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 1998

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	184,836
TO .25	50,936
TO .32	62,338
TO .380	98,266
TO 9MM	284,374
TO .50	279,615

REVOLVERS

TO .22	68,108
TO .32	2,602
TO .39 SPEC	77,289
TO .357 MAG	73,905
TO .44 MAG	64,236
TO .50	38,250

TOTAL	960,365
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TOTAL	324,390
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RIFLES	1,345,899
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SHOTGUNS	1,036,520
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MACHINE GUNS	32,866
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ANY OTHER WEAPON	645
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MISC. FIREARMS	24,506
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EXPORTED

PISTOLS	29,537
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REVOLVERS	15,788
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RIFLES	65,807
--------	--------

SHOTGUNS	89,699
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MACHINE GUNS	12,529
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ANY OTHER WEAPON	23
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MISC. FIREARMS	2,513
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AMENDED 3-08-2000 BY NES
RIFLE & SHOTGUN TOTALS CHANGE

**** FOR PURPOSES OF THIS REPORT ONLY, "PRODUCTION" IS DEFINED AS: FIREARMS, INCLUDING SEPARATE FRAMES OR RECEIVERS, ACTIONS OR BARRELED ACTIONS, MANUFACTURED AND DISPOSED OF IN COMMERCE DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR.

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 1999

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS		REVOLVERS	
TO .22	229,852	TO .22	80,140
TO .25	24,393	TO .32	5,844
TO .32	52,632	TO .39 SPEC	86,356
TO .380	81,881	TO .357 MAG	68,174
TO 9MM	270,298	TO .44 MAG	55,957
TO .50	336,390	TO .50	39,313
TOTAL	995,446	TOTAL	335,784

RIFLES	1,569,685
SHOTGUNS	1,106,995
MACHINE GUNS	22,490
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	15,277
MISC. FIREARMS	39,837

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	34,663
REVOLVERS	48,616
RIFLES	65,669
SHOTGUNS	67,342
MACHINE GUNS	22,255
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	2,955
MISC. FIREARMS	4,028

2-8-2001 BY NES

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DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR.

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2000

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	184,577
TO .25	23,198
TO .32	60,527
TO .380	108,523
TO 9MM	277,176
TO .50	308,900

REVOLVERS

TO .22	79,472
TO .32	1,598
TO .39 SPEC	59,339
TO .357 MAG	81,017
TO .44 MAG	46,931
TO .50	50,603

TOTAL	962,901
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TOTAL	318,960
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RIFLES	1,583,042
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SHOTGUNS	898,442
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MACHINEGUNS	47,400
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ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	32,269
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MISC. FIREARMS	30,196
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EXPORTED

PISTOLS	28,636
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REVOLVERS	48,130
-----------	--------

RIFLES	49,642
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SHOTGUNS	35,087
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MACHINE GUNS	11,719
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ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	4,114
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MISC. FIREARMS	11,132
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PREPARED BY NES 3/11/02

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2001

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	123,374
TO .25	5,697
TO .32	57,823
TO .380	41,634
TO 9MM	213,378
TO .50	184,930

REVOLVERS

TO .22	77,433
TO .32	5,003
TO .39 SPEC	85,628
TO .357 MAG	50,120
TO .44 MAG	39,515
TO .50	62,444

TOTAL	626,836
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TOTAL	320,143
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RIFLES	1,284,554
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SHOTGUNS	679,813
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MACHINEGUNS	56,367
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ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	25,524
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MISC. FIREARMS	21,309
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EXPORTED

PISTOLS	32,151
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REVOLVERS	32,662
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RIFLES	50,685
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SHOTGUNS	46,174
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MACHINE GUNS	10,021
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ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	8,334
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MISC. FIREARMS	10,939
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PREPARED BY NES 1/23/03

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2002

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	144,722
TO .25	10,009
TO .32	53,999
TO .380	59,476
TO 9MM	205,197
TO .50	268,111

REVOLVERS

TO .22	86,806
TO .32	17,599
TO .357 MAG	95,570
TO .38 SPEC	51,472
TO .44 MAG	46,080
TO .50	49,543

TOTAL

741,514

TOTAL

347,070

RIFLES

1,515,286

SHOTGUNS

741,325

MISC. FIREARMS

21,700

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

22,555

REVOLVERS

34,187

RIFLES

60,644

SHOTGUNS

31,897

MISC. FIREARMS

1,473

PREPARED BY NES 1/08/04

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2003

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	189,785
TO .25	10,987
TO .32	43,471
TO .380	79,788
TO 9MM	219,668
TO .50	267,961

REVOLVERS

TO .22	108,518
TO .32	3,928
TO .357 MAG	59,591
TO .38 SPEC	57,078
TO .44 MAG	46,533
TO .50	33,716

TOTAL

811,660

TOTAL

309,364

RIFLES

1,430,324

SHOTGUNS

726,078

MISC. FIREARMS

30,978

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

16,340

REVOLVERS

26,524

RIFLES

62,522

SHOTGUNS

29,537

MISC. FIREARMS

6,989

PREPARED BY NES 3/31/05

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2004 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	211,473
TO .25	10,140
TO .32	32,435
TO .380	68,291
TO 9MM	182,493
TO .50	223,679

REVOLVERS

TO .22	88,570
TO .32	3,446
TO .357 MAG	62,640
TO .38 SPEC	54,842
TO .44 MAG	35,097
TO .50	49,504

TOTAL

728,511

TOTAL

294,099

RIFLES

1,325,138

SHOTGUNS

731,769

MISC. FIREARMS

19,508

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

14,959

REVOLVERS

24,122

RIFLES

62,403

SHOTGUNS

31,025

MISC. FIREARMS

7,411

PREPARED BY NES 1/18/06

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** TOTALS ARE FOR 74% OF MANUFACTURERS. 26% DIDN'T FILE REPORTS.

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2005 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	139,178
TO .25	10,455
TO .32	29,024
TO .380	107,386
TO 9MM	299,681
TO .50	217,701

REVOLVERS

TO .22	63,333
TO .32	2,297
TO .357 MAG	68,476
TO .38 SPEC	68,785
TO .44 MAG	25,802
TO .50	45,512

TOTAL

803,425

TOTAL

274,205

RIFLES

1,431,372

SHOTGUNS

709,313

MISC. FIREARMS

23,179

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

19,196

REVOLVERS

29,271

RIFLES

92,098

SHOTGUNS

46,129

MISC. FIREARMS

7,988

PREPARED BY EYR 01/29/2008

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2006 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	141,651
TO .25	9,625
TO .32	39,197
TO .380	126,939
TO 9MM	352,383
TO .50	351,465

REVOLVERS

TO .22	84,452
TO .32	2,242
TO .357 MAG	99,562
TO .38 SPEC	85,321
TO .44 MAG	54,308
TO .50	56,184

TOTAL

1,021,260

TOTAL

382,069

RIFLES

1,496,505

SHOTGUNS

714,618

MISC. FIREARMS

35,872

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

144,779

REVOLVERS

28,120

RIFLES

102,829

SHOTGUNS

57,771

MISC. FIREARMS

34,022

PREPARED BY EYR 01/29/2008

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2007 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	180,419
TO .25	11,361
TO .32	43,914
TO .380	138,484
TO 9MM	391,312
TO .50	454,174

REVOLVERS

TO .22	91,963
TO .32	3,509
TO .357 MAG	93,320
TO .38 SPEC	104,498
TO .44 MAG	46,719
TO .50	51,325

TOTAL

1,219,664

TOTAL

391,334

RIFLES

1,610,923

SHOTGUNS

645,231

MISC. FIREARMS

55,461

MANUFACTURER'S EXPORTED

PISTOLS

45,053

REVOLVERS

34,662

RIFLES

80,594

SHOTGUNS

26,949

MISC. FIREARMS

17,524

PREPARED BY EYR 1/30/2009

Revised 5/24/2010

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2008 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	195,633
TO .25	14,586 #
TO .32	40,485
TO .380	278,945
TO 9MM	421,746
TO .50	435,876 #

REVOLVERS

TO .22	115,511
TO .32	6,681
TO .357 MAG	105,944
TO .38 SPEC	133,621
TO .44 MAG	31,135
TO .50	38,861

TOTAL

1,387,271 #

TOTAL

431,753

RIFLES

1,746,139 #

SHOTGUNS

630,710 #

MISC. FIREARMS

102,324 #

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

54,030

REVOLVERS

28,205

RIFLES

104,544

SHOTGUNS

41,186

MISC. FIREARMS

523

PREPARED BY TBD 03/08/2011

REVISED 1/14/10 REPORT

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REVISIONS WERE MADE TO FIREARMS TOTAL PRODUCTION

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2009 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	320,697
TO .25	15,053
TO .32	47,396
TO .380	390,897
TO 9MM	586,364
TO .50	507,851

REVOLVERS

TO .22	141,840
TO .32	7,590
TO .357 MAG	107,834
TO .38 SPEC	232,339
TO .44 MAG	29,967
TO .50	27,625

TOTAL

1,868,258

TOTAL

547,195

RIFLES

2,248,851

SHOTGUNS

752,699

MISC. FIREARMS

138,815

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

56,402

REVOLVERS

32,377

RIFLES

61,072

SHOTGUNS

36,455

MISC. FIREARMS

8,438

PREPARED BY EYR 1/20/2011

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2010 *

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	374,505
TO .25	21,722
TO .32	39,792
TO .380	665,512
TO 9MM	630,217
TO .50	526,702

REVOLVERS

TO .22	131,543
TO .32	8,605
TO .357 MAG	126,525
TO .38 SPEC	210,762
TO .44 MAG	45,361
TO .50	36,131

TOTAL

2,258,450

TOTAL

558,927

RIFLES

1,830,556 #

SHOTGUNS

743,378

MISC. FIREARMS

67,929

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

80,041

REVOLVERS

25,286

RIFLES

76,518

SHOTGUNS

43,361

MISC. FIREARMS

16,771

PREPARED BY TBD 1/30/2012

REPORT DATA AS OF 1/30/2012

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REVISIONS WERE MADE TO FIREARMS TOTAL